

## A Look Into CIA Through Eyes of Edwin Wilson

A unique view into the subterranean operations of the Central Intelligence Agency has been provided by a renegade agent, Edwin Wilson, who was lured out of Libya by a ruse into the Justice Department's waiting arms.

He now faces charges of smuggling weapons and running a terrorist school for Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi. But before he left his sanctuary, he talked freely about his life in the CIA. The exclusive taped interview was arranged by my associates Dale Van Atta and Indy Badhwar.

Wilson told how he worked for the Seafarers International Union while he was on the CIA's payroll. But he said there was "no double-dipping." The agency took into account his union salary and deducted it from his CIA pay. He had to file two separate income tax returns.

In the mid-1960s, Wilson was assigned to set up a CIA proprietary, a legitimate business that could be used as a cover for intelligence gathering. He left

formed Maritime Consulting in Washington, D.C. Its purpose was to provide a means for Wilson to gather information on Soviet shipping and other matters of interest to the CIA.

But the consulting firm was also a bona fide business, with three or four employees. Did they know it was a CIA operation? "After a while, they would know," Wilson said. "They would be cleared and briefed, but not told too much."

Wilson put his CIA budget of \$75,000 to \$100,000 a year to good use, and soon the business was thriving. Meanwhile, he was dabbling successfully in the Washington area's booming real-estate market. He bought a 16-acre farm in Virginia and fixed it up. He also bought up mortgages from servicemen who were reassigned out of Washington.

Tempted to get off on his own, Wilson resigned from the CIA in 1971. The agency gave him a \$25,000 bonus, evidently in the expectation that he would keep "the Company" in mind as he wheeled and dealt in the international business world.

Using the bonus and profits from the sale of properties, Wilson put \$60,000 down on a 500-acre farm in the posh Virginia hunt country of Upperville. Over the years, the estate has grown to more than 3,000 acres, with an estimated value of \$5

Wilson was also allowed to keep another company he organized, Consultants International. He said he initially put up his own money, with the idea that the CIA would reimburse him later. Instead, "I got written permission to keep it" when he left the agency, Wilson said.

Several months later, the Navy asked him to run one of its own secret proprietaries for Task Force 157, gathering worldwide information. He thinks the name of the company was World Maritime, "or something like that."

Of one thing he was certain: "I never made a fortune in Task Force 157. In fact, the job cost me money. I took time out as a patriotic duty to help them out because they were really floundering."

Wilson left the Navy in 1975. He was making money in real estate and ship charters. Then he threw in with "a guy I'd met at a party by the name of Frank Terpil," another ex-CIA agent. That's when Wilson's troubles started. The deal involved shipment of explosives to Qaddafi. The Horatio Alger hero had gone from riches to rags.

Footnote: Wilson is now worth more than \$10 million in real estate here and abroad, in corporations and in Swiss bank accounts. His big problem is when he'll be able to